

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 00408

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TSPA, CA
SUBJECT: CANADIAN COMMENT ON U.S. COOPERATION REGARDING
COSMOS 954

1. SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES (A) JAN 26 EXCHANGE IN HOUSE OF COMMONS INVOLVING DEFENSE MINISTER DANSON AND (B) LATEST CP STORY ON U.S. COOPERATION WITH GOC ON COSMOS 954. DESPITE DANSON'S ASSERTION THAT HE IS "PERFECTLY SATISFIED" WITH THIS COOPERATION, CP STORY REPEATED EARLIER PRESS ALLEGATION THAT U.S. BELATEDLY GAVE INFORMATION ON SATELLITE TO GOC. REAL PROBLEM, IN OUR VIEW, WAS THAT CANADIAN DEFENSE OFFICIALS FAILED TO INFORM THEIR SUPERIORS PROMPTLY ABOUT INFORMATION RECEIVED THROUGH NORAD AND INTELLIGENCE CHANNELS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN PAST TWO DAYS THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS IN CANADIAN MEDIA ALLEGING THAT GOC WAS NOT KEPT FULLY INFORMED OR WAS BELATEDLY INFORMED ABOUT U.S.-SOVIET TALKS ON COSMOS 954. AMBASSADOR SPOKE MORNING OF JAN 26 TO DEFENSE MINISTER DANSON (AND TO EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DEPUTY UNDER-SECRETARY GOLDSCHLAG) TO REVIEW COMPLETE RECORD OF OUR CONSULTATIONS WITH GOC OFFICIALS AND TO ENSURE THERE WERE NO MISGIVINGS ABOUT OUR COOPERATION ON THIS MATTER. AT
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END OF CONVERSATION, DANSON SOMEWHAT GRUDGINGLY ADMITTED THAT U.S. HAD PROMPTLY AND FULLY KEPT GOC INFORMED ON DATA THAT WE HAD OBTAINED ABOUT THE SATELLITE.

3. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION BY OPPOSITION IN AFTERNOON JAN 26 SESSION OF HOUSE OF COMMONS, DANSON STATED: "WITH- IN THE LAST HOUR I REVIEWED ALL THE PROCEDURES OF CONSUL-

TATION AND INFORMATION WHICH HAS GONE THROUGH (SIC). I AM PERFECTLY SATISFIED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER, MYSELF AND OUR STAFFS WERE KEPT FULLY INFORMED AT EACH STAGE OF THE OPERATION, WHEN ANYTHING EFFECTIVELY COULD BE DONE OR IT WAS IN OUR BEST INTERESTS TO KNOW. COOPERATION HAS BEEN COMPLETE WITH THE AMERICANS. THE AMERICANS HAVE BEEN OPEN WITH US. AT EACH STAGE WE KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING SO THAT WE COULD DETERMINE WHAT WAS IN OUR BEST INTERESTS AND HOW TO RESPOND. WE HAVE RESPONDED, THE AMERICANS HAVE COOPERATED, AND EVERYTHING THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IS BEING DONE. WE HAD ALL THE INFORMATION WE NEEDED, EXCEPT SOME TECHNICAL INFORMATION WHICH WAS NOT FORTHCOMING INITIALLY FROM THE OWNERS OF THE SATELLITE."

4. OPPOSITION THEN ASKED: "HOW CAN THE MINISTER SAY HE WAS FULLY BRIEFED WHEN THE AMERICANS KNEW ABOUT IT ON DECEMBER (SIC) 19 AND HE FOUND OUT ABOUT IT LAST FRIDAY?" IN RESPONSE, DANSON STATED, "MR. SPEAKER, OUR OFFICIALS WERE NOTIFIED ON THE 19TH (DANSON IS CLEARLY REFERRING TO JANUARY 19) THERE WAS A DANGER OF A DESTABILIZATION IN ORBIT, THAT THE SATELLITE MIGHT RETURN TO EARTH AT AN EARLIER PERIOD THAN ORIGINALLY PREDICTED. THE INFORMATION WAS TRANSFERRED TO OUR HEADQUARTERS, WHEN THE POSSIBILITY WAS THAT IT WOULD FALL ON NORTH AMERICAN TERRITORY ON THE 19TH. THE DATE WAS ISOLATED ON THE 23RD, ALTHOUGH THE LOCATION WAS NOT. THE PRIME MINISTER AND CONFIDENTIAL

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MYSELF WERE ADVISED ON JANUARY 20 OF THIS POSSIBILITY, INDEED THE LIKELIHOOD THAT IT MIGHT COME DOWN. AT THAT TIME THERE WAS NO INDICATED LIKELIHOOD THAT IT WOULD FALL ON CANADIAN SOIL. WE WERE FULLY INFORMED AND FULLY ON ALERT AT THAT TIME. WE HAVE DONE EVERYTHING NECESSARY TO PROCEED. WE HAD ALL THE INFORMATION WE NEEDED IN ORDER TO PROCEED."

5. SUBSEQUENT TO HOUSE OF COMMONS SESSION, CP WIRE SERVICE CARRIED STORY ASSERTING "TOP CANADIAN POLITICAL LEADERS LEARNED ONLY AT THE END OF LAST WEEK - LONG AFTER U.S. OFFICIALS - THAT A DOOMED RUSSIAN SATELLITE CARRIED NUCLEAR MATERIAL; EXCHANGES IN THE COMMONS INDICATED THURSDAY." STORY STATES DANSON LEARNED ONLY LAST FRIDAY (JANUARY 20) SATELLITE CARRIED NUCLEAR POWER PACKAGE WHILE BRZEZINSKI KNEW OF THE NUCLEAR DANGER ON JANUARY 12. CP STORY QUOTES DANSON, HOWEVER, AS INFORMING HOUSE HE WAS FULLY SATISFIED WITH COOPERATION FROM U.S.

6. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO DEFATT SOURCE, DND KNEW LAST NOVEMBER THROUGH NORAD CHANNELS THAT COSMOS 954 WAS MALFUNCTIONING AND THAT THERE WAS DANGER OF ITS RE-ENTERING

EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE. FROM OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH OFFICIALS
IN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND DND, WE SUSPECT THAT THEIR
SUPERIORS, INCLUDING DANSON, WERE NOT APPRISED OF
DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO COSMOS 954 OBTAINED FROM NORAD
AND INTELLIGENCE CHANNELS. REAL PROBLEM, WE BELIEVE, LAY
WITHIN INTERNAL WORKINGS OF CANADIAN BUREAUCRACY. UN-
FORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, MEDIA HAVE SLANTED THEIR REPORTS IN
WAY TO MAKE IT APPEAR U.S. WAS AT FAULT IN NOT PROMPTLY
PASSING ON INFORMATION TO GOC. ENDERS

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